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The California Historical Survey Commission



Issued by
California Historical Survey Commission
1915

Explanatory Statement Regarding the California Historical Survey Commission

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The California Historical Survey Commission was created by an act approved by the Governor on June 12, 1915, which in part reads as follows:

“SECTION 1. There is hereby established a California historical survey commission composed of three members to be chosen as hereinafter provided.

SEC. 2. The members of this commission shall be appointed by the governor of the State of California; *provided*, only that one of the members of said commission shall be nominated by the board of regents of the University of California, and that one of the members of said commission shall be nominated by the board of grand officers of the Order of Native Sons of the Golden West; all nominations however shall be subject to approval by the governor.

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SEC. 4. The purpose of this commission shall be to make a survey of materials on local history within the State of California by investigating documents in local depositories and in the possession of private individuals and other sources of original information on the early history of the State of California and to compile and keep a record of such sources of information.” (Cal. Stat. 1915, Chapter 763.)

ORGANIZATION. In accordance with the provisions of the act the members of the Commission were appointed as follows: Hon. John F. Davis, Grand President of the Native Sons of the Golden West, San Francisco; Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, Professor of American History in the University of California, Berkeley; Mr. James M. Guinn, Secretary and Curator of the Southern California Historical Society, Los Angeles.

The organization of the Commission was completed October 9, 1915, at which time Commissioner John F. Davis was chosen chairman and Mr. Owen C. Coy, of Berkeley, appointed to

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the position of secretary and archivist and entrusted with the general supervision of the field work of the Commission.

An Advisory Committee of persons chosen on account of their ability and experience in dealing with the materials of California history was also named at this time. The members of this committee are: Dr. H. Morse Stephens, Sather Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley; Dr. Ephraim D. Adams, Professor of History at Stanford University, Palo Alto; Rev. Joseph M. Gleason, Member of the American Historical Association, Palo Alto; Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt, Professor of Economics and History at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Mrs. Margaret V. Allen, Secretary of the Pioneer and Historical Society, San Diego; Dr. Charles E. Chapman, Assistant Professor of California History at the University of California, Berkeley; Miss Endora Garoutte, California Department, State Library, Sacramento; and Mr. Charles B. Turrill, San Francisco.

PURPOSE. As indicated in the fourth section of the act creating the Commission, its first purpose is to discover, examine and make known the sources of information on the early history of the State of California.

Under the personal supervision of the secretary and archivist of the Commission the work has already been completed in the region of Humboldt County with most gratifying results, revealing the fact that much material of great historical value lies buried among the dusty volumes and papers in the public archives or unknown in the hands of private parties.

As rapidly as time and resources permit this survey will be carried into all the counties of the State, where an examination of the archives of the county officials will be made. In like manner the land office records and those of the other important federal officers will be considered.

In addition to the public archives much invaluable information resides in the files of early newspapers, and in manuscript diaries or letters in private hands or in special collections. In

so far as possible an effort will be made to discover these materials and to publish fully such information as will be needed to give an indication as to their accessibility and the nature of their contents. In order that this feature of the work may be of the greatest value the hearty co-operation of all who may know of the presence of this kind of material is most earnestly desired.

In addition to the benefit which it is evident this work will be to the student of history and the social sciences, the Commission hopes also to render a distinct service to the local authorities and to the State at large in the matter of the safe preservation of the archives and in convenient and time-saving methods in the keeping of public records. This will be made possible through the comparison of the various methods pursued in the local offices of this State and by communication with similar commissions in other states. Archival science is becoming constantly more important and our own State should share in its benefits.

In a word then, the one aim of the Historical Survey Commission is to render to the scholars and officials of this State the greatest service possible within the limit of its resources. Any assistance rendered or courtesy shown the secretary or other of the field assistants will be greatly appreciated by the members of the Commission.

If further information regarding the Commission is desired address: Owen C. Coy, Secretary and Archivist of the Historical Survey Commission, 2473 Princee Street, Berkeley, Cal.

Signed,

JOHN F. DAVIS, *Chairman.*

HERBERT E. BOLTON.

JAMES M. GUINN.

Members of the Commission.

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San Francisco, November 15, 1915.

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